
Released March 22, 2005, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, U.S. Department of Agriculture. For information on *Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin* call Brian T. Young at (202) 720-7621, office hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET.

**National Weather Summary
Volume 92, No. 12
March 13 - 19, 2005**

For additional information, call (202) 720-2397.

Highlights: Widespread, generally light precipitation across the **Northwest** provided a slight boost in topsoil moisture for pastures and winter grains but had a negligible effect on the region's outlook for significantly below-normal spring and summer runoff. Although precipitation fell in most other parts of the **West**, totals were highest in **northern and central California** and the **southern Rockies**. On March 14-15, heavy snow as far east as the **southern High Plains** maintained adequate to locally excessive moisture reserves. In contrast, soil moisture shortages persisted on the **northern High Plains**, despite several episodes of light precipitation. Cool weather (more than 10 degrees F in a few locations) prevailed throughout the **Plains**, slowing or halting the growth of pastures and winter grains that had begun to develop in late February and early March. Chilly conditions (2 to 10 degrees F below normal) also prevailed in the **Corn Belt**, maintaining the dormancy of winter grains in **Michigan** and limiting wheat development elsewhere in the **Midwest**. On March 18-19, heavy snow fell in a narrow band across the **northern Corn Belt**, stretching from **southeastern South Dakota into Lower Michigan**. Elsewhere, widespread showers across the **Gulf Coast and Southeastern States** slowed fieldwork but improved moisture reserves for pastures, winter grains, and newly planted summer crops. Rainfall was heaviest, totaling 2 inches or more, in previously dry **southern Florida** and in scattered locations elsewhere across the **southern Atlantic and Gulf Coast States**.

Early in the week, cold weather in the **Great Lakes region** contrasted with record warmth in the **Pacific Northwest**. On March 13, **Marquette, MI**, posted a daily-record of -15 degrees F. Elsewhere in **Michigan**, record lows for March 14 included -8 degrees F in **Gaylord** and 5 degrees F in **Muskegon**. Temperatures remained at or below 32 degrees F on 8 consecutive days (March 8-15) in **Muskegon**, tying 1984 for its third-longest March streak on record behind 11 days in 1960 and 10 days in 1996. Farther west, daily-record highs in **Oregon** for March 13 included 72 degrees F in **Tillamook** and 80 degrees F in **Brookings**. **Tillamook** (72 degrees F) set another record the following day. Meanwhile in **Washington**, **Olympia's** record low and high on the same day (25 and 67 degrees F on March 14) were representative of not only the dry air covering the Northwest but were also reflective of the region's dry soils.

The week also opened with record warmth in **southern Texas**, where record highs for March 13 included 99 degrees F in **McAllen** and 94 degrees F in **Corpus Christi**. By midweek, however, below-normal temperatures prevailed nearly nationwide. Warmth lasted in **Florida** through March 16, when **Vero Beach** (89 degrees F) collected a daily-record high. Farther west, a late-winter storm moved across the **southern Rockies** and the **southern High Plains**. March 14-15 snowfall reached 9.4 inches in **Flagstaff, AZ**; 12.0 inches in **Amarillo, TX**; and 24.0 inches in **Las Vegas, NM**. In the storm's wake, very chilly weather swept into the **Southwest**. Daily-record lows for March 16 included -7 degrees F in **Raton, NM**, and -2

degrees F in **Alamosa, CO**. **Raton's** low was also a record for the month (previously, -4 degrees F on March 1, 1960). Farther east, lows of 30 degrees F (on March 17) in **Waco, TX**; 34 degrees F (on March 18) in **Baton Rouge, LA**; and 42 degrees F (on March 19) in **Melbourne, FL**, were among several **Southern** daily records.

Farther north, **Rochester, MN**, experienced its greatest 1-day snowfall on record on March 18, when 19.8 inches fell (previously, 15.4 inches on January 22, 1982). **Rochester's** March 17-19 storm total reached 20.2 inches. Meanwhile, **LaCrosse, WI**, measured 15.2 inches from March 17-19, marking its ninth-largest, single-storm total on record. It was also **LaCrosse's** fourth-greatest March storm, behind 19.1 inches on March 12-14, 1997; 18.5 inches on March 4-5, 1959; and 16.1 inches on March 18-20, 1933. Similarly, 12.2 inches of snow blanketed **Sioux Falls, SD**, on March 17-18, the city's fifth-highest March total in a 24-hour period. Elsewhere, late-week storminess produced high winds along the **northern Pacific Coast**. In **northwestern Oregon**, peak gusts on the night of March 19-20 reached 70 m.p.h. in **Cannon Beach** and 69 m.p.h. on **Clatsop Spit**, near the mouth of the **Columbia River**. Farther south, March 18-19 rainfall totaled 0.30 inch in downtown **Los Angeles, CA**, leaving the city's season-to-date (July 1 - March 19) precipitation at 34.81 inches (266 percent of normal). **Los Angeles'** seasonal record of 38.18 inches was established in 1883-84, followed by 34.84 inches in 1889-90.

Mild weather prevailed throughout **Alaska**, with mainland temperatures ranging from 5 to 21 degrees F above normal. **King Salmon** posted daily-record highs on March 14, 17, and 18 (51, 49, and 52 degrees F). **Cold Bay** closed the week with consecutive record highs (45 and 46 degrees F) on March 18 and 19. Heavy precipitation ended early in the week across **southern Alaska**, where **Valdez** collected daily-record totals on March 12 (1.72 inches) and 13 (1.48 inches). Through March 20, **Valdez** received 7.75 inches (253 percent of normal), including 19.1 inches of snow. In contrast, March 1-20 precipitation totaled just 0.01 inch (2 percent of normal) in **King Salmon**. Following a period of early-week showers, cool, mostly dry weather affected **Hawaii**. Weekly temperatures averaged as much as 5 degrees F below normal. On **Maui**, **Kahului** notched consecutive daily-record lows (53 and 51 degrees F on March 15 and 16, respectively). **Lihue, Kauai** (53 degrees F), also tallied a record low for March 16. **Kokee, Kauai**, measured 1.32 inches of rain in a 48-hour period from March 13-15 but observed only light showers thereafter.

National Agricultural Summary
March 14 - 20, 2005

Highlights: Temperatures were below normal across most of the Nation, except along the Pacific Coast, where above-normal temperatures prevailed. Light snowfall in the Pacific Northwest, northern Rocky Mountains, and northern Great Plains improved soil moisture conditions. However, expectations remained low for spring and summer runoff due to well-below-normal snow accumulation during the winter. An arctic air mass brought heavy snow and below-zero temperatures to the northern Corn Belt, while mostly dry but cool conditions prevailed across the remainder of the Corn Belt. Dry weather in the central and southern Great Plains was beneficial for winter wheat development. In the Delta and Southeast, stormy weather continued through most of the week, delaying land preparation and planting. However, fieldwork resumed over the weekend as drier conditions returned.

Heavy rainfall in Florida hindered fieldwork and caused some concern for vegetable quality but improved soil moisture conditions. In Georgia, fieldwork was hampered early in the week due to rainfall but resumed as drier conditions emerged later in the week. Peaches and blueberries were beginning to bloom. Land preparation and planting remained well behind normal in Louisiana, where another week of rainfall kept field conditions soggy. In Texas, corn, cotton, rice, and sorghum planting were active but behind the normal pace. With favorably dry weather, Kansas oat growers were ahead of their normal planting pace, while freeze and wind damage to winter wheat was minimal. In California, apricot and cherry trees began developing fruit, while harvest of lettuce, chard, spinach, and winter potatoes was underway.

ACCESS TO REPORTS!!

For your convenience, there are several ways to obtain NASS reports, data products, and services:

INTERNET ACCESS

All NASS reports are available free of charge on the worldwide Internet. For access, connect to the Internet and go to the NASS Home Page at: **www.usda.gov/nass/**. Select "Today's Reports" or Publications and then Reports Calendar or Publications and then Search, by Title or Subject.

E-MAIL SUBSCRIPTION

All NASS reports are available by subscription free of charge direct to your e-mail address. Starting with the NASS Home Page at **www.usda.gov/nass/**, click on **Publications**, then click on the **Subscribe by E-mail** button which takes you to the page describing e-mail delivery of reports. Finally, click on **Go to the Subscription Page** and follow the instructions.

PRINTED REPORTS OR DATA PRODUCTS

CALL OUR TOLL-FREE ORDER DESK: 800-999-6779 (U.S. and Canada)
Other areas, please call 703-605-6220 FAX: 703-605-6900
(Visa, MasterCard, check, or money order acceptable for payment.)

ASSISTANCE

For **assistance** with general agricultural statistics or further information about NASS or its products or services, contact the **Agricultural Statistics Hotline** at **800-727-9540**, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, or e-mail: **nass@nass.usda.gov**.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.